



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

March 28, 2018

Ms. Catherine M. Hudgins  
Hunter Mill District Supervisor  
12000 Bowman Towne Drive  
Reston, VA 20190

Supervisor Hudgins,

As you requested, planning staff has reviewed the letters from the Reston Association (RA) and the Coalition for a Planned Reston (CPR) that request changes to the Comprehensive Plan for Reston (hereafter referred to as the Reston Master Plan) and actions regarding its implementation. The proposed changes and actions are outlined in the letter from RA dated November 17, 2017 (Attachment 1) and the letter and attachment from CPR dated February 5, 2018 and January 31, 2018, respectively (Attachment 2).

Many of the concerns raised by RA and CPR are associated with their desire that you (and the Board of Supervisors) initiate an amendment to the newly adopted Reston Master Plan. As you know the Reston Master Plan was the result of a six year planning study that started with a first phase that evaluated land use changes in the areas around the three new Silver Line Metrorail stations in Reston (Wiehle-Reston East, Reston Town Center and Herndon). That phase was guided by a 50 member Task Force (including alternates) appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The task force was comprised of community residents and representatives of community organizations, landowners and businesses. The task force met from 2010 to 2014 in almost 200 meetings. All meetings were open to and attended by members of the public. Each meeting included an open comment period that allowed anyone in the community an opportunity to direct questions and comments to the Task Force and staff. There were also several communitywide meetings that focused on topical issues like the future of the transit station areas and provided updates on the proposed plan recommendations under development. The second phase of the Reston planning process began in 2014 and was organized around community meetings that solicited ideas and comments on the desired future of Reston's neighborhoods and village centers. Drafts of the newly proposed plan language were openly discussed, and posted on line for broad community input and participation. All interested parties were given the opportunity to review and provide comments prior to consideration and action by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

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Recognizing the time, energy and community commitment that go into our major multi-year land use studies, it has long been the county's practice not to amend these new plans within the first five years of their adoption. The current North County Site Specific Plan Amendment Process, which includes the Hunter Mill District, excludes Reston for this reason. Staff continues to support this practice and cannot support changes to land use, density or intensity recommendations in the Reston Master Plan for the Transit Station Areas until after 2019 and for Reston's neighborhoods and village centers until after 2020. Staff is open to considering changes to the Reston Master Plan that clarify recommendations, correct oversights or are editorial in nature.

This letter is organized around the nine points raised by RA followed by the points raised by CPR. Some of the changes proposed by RA and CPR are similar, so where a similar response is appropriate, it is so noted.

RA Point 1 – Amend the Reston Master Plan to add back a population cap.

The original Land Use Plan Map for Reston included a table "Population Data" that referenced population ranges for portions of Reston and a total "not to exceed" 78,000 people. Staff can support the inclusion of a future population target as part of the vision for Reston as was done in the plan for Tysons. In our view this target should not be referred to as a cap, but as an articulation of the future vision for Reston's growth.

The monitoring of Reston's population growth should be based on information from the U.S. Census, rather than using the formulas in the PRC provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. This will more accurately reflect the actual population in Reston by using a widely accepted standard of measurement.

RA Point 2 – Provide a statement that the Reston Village Centers are planned to reflect land uses that are there today and that redevelopment should only be considered in the context of a future amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

Each of Reston's village centers (with the exception of Lake Anne) has a "baseline" recommendation that is meant to reflect the existing development. This recommendation is for neighborhood serving retail and service uses up to .25 FAR, integrated with office, institutional uses and residential development. In addition, these village centers have the opportunity to redevelop according to the "Guidelines for Village Center Redevelopment" set forth in the Reston Master Plan. These guidelines outline the process and planning objectives that should be achieved when considering proposals to redevelop Reston's village centers. The guidelines indicate that any property owner contemplating redevelopment will "need to work with the community and Fairfax County to create a detailed plan for the property."

Staff believes these guidelines refer to the submission of a development plan associated with a zoning application and need not trigger an amendment to the Reston Master Plan. The village centers are currently planned for a mix of uses and are designated for high density



residential. A development plan that shows how the proposed future redevelopment will achieve the planning objectives for Reston's village centers satisfies the documentation needed for staff, stakeholder and legislative review.

One area where the plan for the village centers could be clarified is to more explicitly state that redevelopment is recommended to occur in the existing non-residential or mixed-use areas. As written the plan indicates that "Each of the Village Centers consists of a non-residential mixed use area and adjacent residential uses. The focus of redevelopment should be in the non-residential mixed use area." The adjacent residential uses are stable residential neighborhoods and are not targets for future redevelopment. While this is implied by the current text, the guidance could be strengthened and clarified to indicate that these areas are not the focus of redevelopment and that the residential density allowed with redevelopment should be calculated on the area subject to redevelopment and not the entire village center.

RA Point 3 – Similar to the Tysons Plan, initiate an amendment to the Reston Plan that requires periodic Plan updates.

The update process for the Tysons Plan was established as one of the follow-on motions at the time the plan was adopted. Staff has been monitoring the implementation of the Reston Plan and is prepared to provide a similar progress report which can report on such things as:

- existing development;
- land use changes over time;
- rezoning actions and development activity;
- growth in population and jobs;
- affordable/workforce housing;
- transportation improvements and funding;
- Silver Line rail service;
- transit service;
- pedestrian and bike enhancements;
- green buildings and energy and resource conservation; and,
- public facilities and parks.

RA Point 4 – Request that the Reston Network Advisory Group fully review the current Reston Transportation Network Analysis assumptions and methodology, addressing questions raised by the Reston community.

County staff and the Reston community engaged in the Reston Transportation Network Analysis for over two years. The assumptions made for trip generation were discussed with both the Advisory Group and with the Stakeholders Group, and are consistent with the guidance in the Comprehensive Plan. The methodology was well vetted, was transparent, and was presented to the Advisory Group and Stakeholders at all decision making points. Staff is currently working

on the Final Report, and does not believe that there are any outstanding aspects of the analysis not already vetted with the Advisory Group. However, if members of the community have questions, or if the information provided in the Final Report is unclear, county staff is willing to meet with the community to answer any questions.

RA Point 5 – Implement a collaborative mechanism for a continued dialogue to establish a realistic and detailed plan to increase the number and capacity of recreational facilities within Reston.

Each new development in Reston is evaluated as part of the development review process to determine how each project can address the park and recreation recommendations in the Reston Master Plan. Through this process the county has secured commitments for on-site urban park spaces as well as monetary contributions to Fairfax County that can be used to upgrade recreational facilities in the Reston area. The plan sets a goal of 12 new athletic fields to serve Reston and staff is committed to working with applicants and the community to achieve this goal.

The plan recognizes that several entities provide park and recreation facilities and amenities including the Fairfax County Park Authority, the Reston Association, the Reston Community Center, and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. County staff is open to working collectively with all of these groups and the Reston community to plan for how best to meet future park and recreation needs. We would suggest that the Hunter Mill District Planning Commissioner and Park Authority Board Member be a part of these discussions.

RA Point 6 – Initiate an amendment to the Reston Plan to add assertive statements that infrastructure capacity must be increased at the same time as new development occurs.

The plan currently has language which indicates that the provision of future facilities will need to be coordinated with the rate at which planned development occurs. It also calls for the development of a phasing plan linking future development with specific improvements with the stated goal of balancing projected development with infrastructure and public facilities over time.

We feel that this plan guidance is appropriate and that what is needed at this time is the development of the phasing plan referenced in the adopted plan. This action is in line with the points in the letter calling for collaboration and actions regarding the provision of future park/recreation, schools and transportation facilities.

RA Point 7 – Direct staff to collaborate with public schools staff and the Reston community to establish a realistic plan for the provision of increased school capacity in Reston.

Planning staff in DPZ has a close working relationship with the planning staff at Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). We worked collaboratively with FCPS staff during the Reston planning study to identify the impacts of future growth on school capacity and we have



continued that partnership during the review of each development application. We will continue to work with FCPS and share with the Reston community the Fairfax County actions that have been taken to address future public school needs as well as the private sector commitments that have been made to address school capacity impacts identified concurrent with approved development applications.

RA Point 8 – Initiate an amendment to the Reston Master Plan to remove the road connection between American Dream Way and Isaac Newton Square.

Staff believes the proposed future roadway is important to provide needed connectivity for planned redevelopment of the Isaac Newton Square area, and will provide congestion relief by serving as an alternative route to Sunset Hills Road. If built, the connection could reduce congestion at the Sunset Hills/Wiehle Avenue intersection. This future road connection has not been designed, so its exact configuration or potential impacts to the golf course or environmentally sensitive land in the area is not known. The County has no immediate plans to initiate design work on this road because there are other higher priority transportation network improvement projects that we are advancing. However, in the event that this road connection is advanced to the design stage, either as part of private redevelopment or as part of a public project, there will be many opportunities for the community to have input into the process and provide feedback. As with any new roadway design the County will work to minimize negative impacts on existing uses (such as the golf course) and the environment. In our view, the planned road being shown as part of the conceptual street network does not negatively affect the viability of the Hidden Creek Golf Course.

RA Point 9 - Initiate an amendment to the Reston Plan to change the high density multi-family land use map category from 50+ du/ac (i.e. unlimited) to the maximum necessary to accommodate the two properties shown with this designation.

Staff acknowledges that the land use map category 50+ might be viewed as allowing unlimited development on the sites with this designation, although this was not the intent. Staff is willing to look at how best to amend the plan to clarify the limits of this category.

CPR - Affordable Housing

The objectives of the Coalition with respect to affordable housing are: making sure that 20% of all new housing is affordable; assuring that affordable units called for in the plan are built in Reston; and, creating a Reston Housing Trust Fund to facilitate financing of affordable housing. To achieve this 20 percent objective, the Coalition would like to incorporate plan text that was adopted for Tysons and apply it to Reston. The adopted Reston Master Plan calls for the provision of affordable and workforce housing in the Transit Station Areas based on a sliding scale tied to the intensity of development as determined by its maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR). At a 1.0 FAR the percentage of affordable/workforce housing to be provided is 12 percent, increasing to 18 percent at 4.0 FAR. Intensity above 4.0 FAR would need to provide 20 percent affordable/workforce units. This approach to Reston was developed recognizing that

development in Tysons has the opportunity for much higher intensities as the plan for Tysons sets no maximum intensity within a quarter mile of the station and approvals in these areas have ranged as high as 8.0 FAR. In addition, the Reston Master Plan has a provision for a \$3.00 per square foot contribution to affordable housing for all non-residential development. This is the same as Tysons and will help fund affordable housing in Reston.

To change from the sliding scale that was adopted to a flat 20 percent affordable housing requirement would be a significant change to the land use recommendations for Reston's Transit Station Areas and, as such, is not supported by staff. The sliding scale approach was developed to recognize that the ability to provide affordable and workforce housing is linked to the density/intensity that is planned.

Reston has a long history of being an inclusive community and as such is one of the most critical areas in the county for preserving as well as creating new affordable housing opportunities. However, the CPR recommendation to create a separate Reston Housing Trust Fund is not supported as it could have the unintended consequence of putting the county at a disadvantage when faced with opportunities to provide affordable housing. Should there be an opportunity in the future to preserve affordable housing in Reston, as was done with the Crescent Apartments at Lake Anne, there could be pressure to limit funding to whatever is available in the Reston housing fund and not bring other sources to bear because of the implication that to do so would be at the expense of other areas of the county. The county's ability to provide affordable housing is directly linked to its ability to tap a variety of funding sources when needed and having separate pots of money for different areas of the county will hamper this needed flexibility. Therefore, staff does not support the idea of establishing a separate Reston Housing Trust Fund.

#### CPR – Land Use Designations and Residential Land Use Categories

The Coalition would like to delete unlimited density potential of the high density category; lower the planned density in all categories; and set overall maximum Reston population at 120,000. Staff supports the concept of clarifying the long term vision of Reston by including a future population estimate or target for future growth. This was an element of the previous Reston Land Use Plan and we believe this should be corrected. We are not prepared at this time to say what the population figure should be, but we are prepared to work with the community on this type of amendment should it be authorized.

The proposal to lower the maximum density of the Medium-density Multi-family category from 50 to 30 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC) is a significant change in the land use density recommendations of the adopted plan and is not supported by staff. However, we do recognize that the High-density category, which is characterized as 50+ on the Land Use Map may need to be clarified as this category was never meant to convey a recommendation for unlimited density. Staff is willing to work with the community to see how this element of the plan might best be clarified.



#### CPR - Guidelines for Village Center Redevelopment

The Coalition's objectives for village center redevelopment include: keeping redevelopment to neighborhood scale; keeping redevelopment in mixed-use areas only; continuing the planned involvement of the community in any redevelopment; and, sustaining the economic viability of the remaining three village centers. To achieve the neighborhood scale objective, the Coalition proposes to limit redevelopment to Medium-density Multi-family, at a density range of 21-30 DU/AC. This is a significant departure from the High-density Multi-family designation at a maximum density of 50 DU/AC density that is recommended for the village centers and is not supported by staff. The village centers have long had this high density designation and maximum density, and there is little justification provided to support revising it other than maintaining that this would be more reflective of the "neighborhood scale" referenced in the plan. There is also a Coalition recommendation that any redevelopment of the village centers should result in 25 percent open space based on the acreage of the mixed use area of the village center, which is also a significant change to the land use recommendations for village centers and is not supported by staff.

The Coalition would limit redevelopment to the existing mixed use areas of the village centers. As stated in the response to RA Point 2, this is an area where the Reston Master Plan might need to be clarified. The adjacent residential areas while part of the village center are stable residential neighborhoods and are not targets for future redevelopment. Staff supports looking at the residential areas within each village center for the purpose of better defining the area that is subject to redevelopment and clarifying that the residential density allowed with redevelopment should be calculated on the area subject to redevelopment and not the entire village center.

#### CPR - Implementation - Monitoring, Regulation, Partnerships and Phasing

With respect to implementation of the Reston Master Plan the Coalition wants assurance that development is tracked and that infrastructure occurs with the availability of new development. Staff has been monitoring the implementation of the Reston Plan and will commit to providing a progress report for Reston similar to the report that is compiled for Tysons in October/November of 2018. In addition, we will work with the Reston community in identifying when new public facilities are needed and how these facility needs might best be addressed through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for schools and other public facilities.

#### CPR - Phasing Transportation and Public Facilities Development

The plan currently has language that indicates that the provision of future facilities will need to be coordinated with the rate at which planned development occurs. It also calls for the development of a phasing plan linking future development with specific improvements with the stated goal of balancing projected development with infrastructure and public facilities over time.

We feel that this plan guidance is appropriate, and that what is needed at this time is the development of the phasing plan referenced in the adopted Reston Master Plan. This action is in line with the points in the RA and CPR letters calling for collaboration and actions regarding the provision of future park/recreation, schools and transportation facilities.

CPR - Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities

See response to RA Point 5.

CPR - Reston Neighborhoods

The Coalition has expressed the desire to delete current language that provides a redevelopment option for St. Johns Wood. This multi-family development was designated high density residential on the previous Reston Master Plan and the property owners submitted a nomination to keep that designation as part of the master plan update. Their nomination was considered during that process and the option in the adopted plan reflects support for redevelopment under certain conditions outlined in the plan. A development application to implement this redevelopment option has been filed and has been reviewed by staff and the Reston community. The application is currently in a deferred status at the request of the applicant.

To delete the redevelopment option for St Johns Wood apartments as requested by the Coalition would represent a change in land use density and is not supported by staff.

CPR - Mapped Road Across Hidden Creek Country Club

See response to RA Point 8.

In summary, staff is open to clarifying several areas in the Reston Master Plan as noted in our response and continuing to work with the Reston community to address their concerns about the future. However, staff does not support the proposed changes to the Reston Master Plan that would affect land use, density or intensity recommendations.

Please feel free to contact me at 703-324-1110 if you have any questions. We are available to meet with you and representatives of the Reston community, including RA and CPR, to work through issues and concerns and to continue the collaborative and cooperative working relationship that we have had with you and the Reston community over the years.

Sincerely,



Fred R. Selden Director,  
Department of Planning and Zoning



Letter to Supervisor Hudgins

March 28, 2018

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cc: Sharon Bulova, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
John Carter, Hunter Mill Planning Commissioner  
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